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Bangalore Mirror ON SATURDAY

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New empanelled vendor system robs apartment dwellers of bargaining power, with just one vendor calling all shots, waste collection charges have been pushed up by 322%; citizens feel the heat as maintenance costs run high

BIG BUCK FOR THE MUCK

Resident welfare associations angered by plan to link property tax to waste collection compliance

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Bengaluru's garbage management issue has triggered a fresh controversy, with apartment residents alleging that the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) enabled a monopolistic solid waste system that is sharply increasing costs for bulk waste generators across the city.

Under the new empanelled vendor system, waste collection charges have surged by more than 322%, pushing up monthly maintenance expenses and leaving apartment associations with no bargaining power. "Our apartment complex has 108 flats and generates nearly 2,500 kg of wet waste every month," said Sudhish Kumar, an IT professional and former secretary of Keerthi Riviera Annexe, Kaggadasapura.

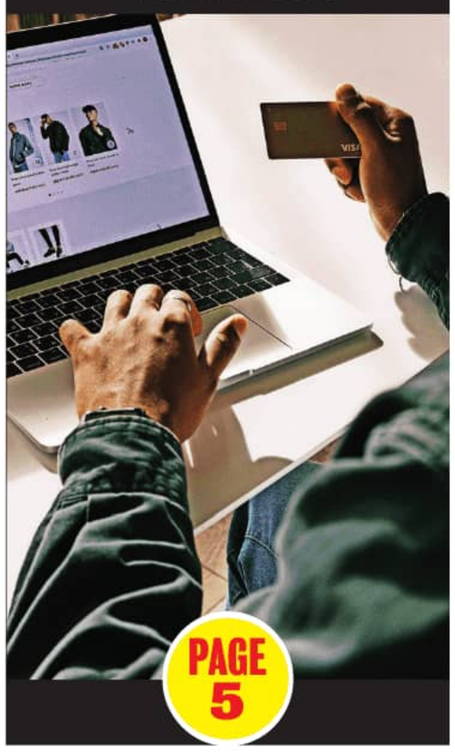
"Till April 30, the earlier vendor charged Rs 2.84 per kg for collecting wet waste, which totaled around Rs 7,100 per month. The new empanelled vendor charges Rs 12 per kg, bringing the monthly bill to nearly Rs 30,000. This is an increase of Rs 22,900 per month—over 322% higher, or about 4.2 times the earlier cost."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

TRASH BOMB IS TICKING

SWINDLERS' LIST

Fraudsters in Armed Force officers' clothing reel in buyers online only to offer them raw deals



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THINGS TO DO

01 Mango mania

Dial M for Mango is a limited-time cocktail menu at The Den Bengaluru featuring five mango-based cocktails. The menu includes Mango Cheesecake with mango distillate, mascarpone, and rosé; Whiskey Chocolate Mango with whiskey and dark chocolate; Mango Rush Smash with mango and lime; Mango Curry Leaf with vodka and curry leaf tincture; and Mango Spark with tequila, chilli, plum and mango soda. Each cocktail is priced at Rs 899 plus taxes.
Where: The Nest, The Den Bengaluru
When: May 1 to June 30, 11 pm to 1 am

02 Once upon a stage

Bhoomija presents Saavirada Sharanavva, Stories and Songs, a deeply personal performance by one of India's most revered theatre practitioners, B Jayashree — weaving together memory, music and the magic of the stage.
Where: Prestige Centre for Performing Arts, Konanakunte;
When: May 16, 6.30 pm

03 Discovery through dance

Atta Galatta is hosting a Dance Movement Therapy session that invites participants to explore how the body carries emotions, stories and energy, through simple, guided movements that encourage self-discovery.
Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar;
When: May 16, 6 pm

04 Glow with the flow

Candlelight® by Live Your City returns to Bengaluru this season, offering audiences intimate evenings where thousands of glowing candles transform venues into immersive settings for unforgettable live music experiences.
Where: Alliance Française de Bangalore;
When: May 17, 4.30 pm, 6.30 pm, 8.30 pm

05 Mind matters

'Why Did You Do It Like That?' is a dialogue with the authors of the book 'And How Do You Feel About That', which aims to demystify psychotherapy and offer readers a glimpse into the therapist–client conversation.
Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar;
When: May 17, 4 pm

Report faults Azim Premji University's response to attack

Fact-finding team alleges that despite prior knowledge of possible tensions, university administration failed to take preventive measures, also criticises disciplinary action taken

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A fact-finding report released in Bengaluru on Friday accused the administration of Azim Premji University of failing to adequately respond to an alleged violent attack by members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) on campus earlier this year, while instead targeting its own students through disciplinary action.

The report, unveiled at the Bengaluru Press Club by academics, activists and student representatives, examined the events surrounding an incident on February 24, 2026, when around 20 alleged ABVP members reportedly entered the university campus, vandalised property and assaulted students over a planned reading circle on the Kunan-Poshpora case organised by student group SPARK-APU.

According to the report, police detained members of the group following the incident and registered an FIR against them based on a complaint filed by the university's head of security. However, a second FIR was later filed against SPARK-APU after a complaint by the university registrar.

The fact-finding team claimed the university administration had prior knowledge that tensions could escalate but failed to take preventive measures. It also alleged that the university had not publicly condemned the attack or pushed for swift action against those accused of violence. "Despite having prior knowledge that an attack may take place, the university administration failed to take preventive measures," the report stated.

Earlier this year, group of alleged ABVP members reportedly entered university campus, vandalised property and assaulted students (File photo)

Report urges university to withdraw charges against SPARK-APU, revoke suspended student's punishment and actively engage with students to rebuild confidence in administration

The report further criticised the university's disciplinary proceedings, including the constitution of a Special Disciplinary Committee and the suspension of one student for two years earlier this month.

The fact-finding team also raised concerns about what it described as a growing atmosphere of fear and surveillance on campus. "Increasing deployment of security and introducing practices of surveillance do not guarantee safety; they instill fear," the report noted.

Calling the alleged ABVP attack "highly condemnable," the report said the actions of the group "clearly amount to vigilantism" and urged police to conduct a fair and swift investigation.

The report additionally linked the incident to what it described as a wider pattern of attempts to curb student expression in universities across the country, including at institutions such as Jawaharlal Nehru University, Banaras Hindu University and University of Hyderabad.

The fact-finding team demanded that the university withdraw charges against SPARK-APU, revoke the suspended student's punishment and engage with students to restore confidence in the administration. It also called on police to close the case against SPARK-APU and take action against those involved in the alleged attack.

Purple Line to face disruption on Sunday

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) will temporarily curtail train services on a section of the Purple Line for two hours on May 17, 2026, to undertake essential maintenance work between Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Station (Majestic) and Sir M Visvesvaraya Station (Central College). The service disruption will be effective from 7 am to 9 am between Sri Balagangadharanatha Swamiji Station (Hosahalli) and Cubbon Park Metro Stations.

During this two-hour maintenance window, regular metro operations will commence as scheduled at 7 am from other respective terminal stations and run normally along Challaghatta to Vijayanagar and MG Road. Uninterrupted services across the entire length of the Purple Line will resume promptly from 9 am onwards. **–BMB**

67-year-old gets bail in NDPS case

The Karnataka High Court has granted bail to a 67-year-old man accused in a narcotics case, observing that the prosecution failed to establish a prima facie case under Section 25 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act because no contraband was recovered from his premises. Justice MGS Kamal passed the order while allowing a criminal petition filed under Section 483 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). The court held that merely finding narcotics inside vehicles parked near the premises could not amount to allowing the premises to be used for narcotics consumption. After considering the submissions, the court granted bail subject to a Rs 2 lakh bond and two sureties. **–BMB**

Ugandan judge undergoes transplant at Fortis B'luru

A 51-year-old Supreme Court judge from Moroto, Uganda, underwent a robot-assisted kidney transplant at Fortis Hospital Bannerghatta Road after being diagnosed with Stage V chronic kidney disease, hypertension, diabetes and Retrovirus-positive status. The patient also had a history of multiple blood transfusions, which increased the risk of organ rejection. Dr Mohan Keshavamurthy, Principal Director, Renal Sciences, Fortis Hospitals, Bengaluru, performed the transplant under Fortis' Total Robot Enabled and Assisted Transplant (TREAT) programme, with the patient's biological sister serving as the donor. Both donor and recipient surgeries were conducted using a robot-assisted minimally invasive approach. The patient was discharged within a week with advice for regular follow-up.

The patient said, "The doctors and staff at Fortis supported me throughout the journey and ensured I was comfortable at every stage." **–BMB**

CM opposes fuel price hike, seeks rollback

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah criticised the Narendra Modi-led government for increasing fuel prices after the Assembly elections in four states and one Union Territory and demanded that the hike be withdrawn. He said the Congress government in Karnataka had earlier faced criticism from the BJP for a smaller increase despite fuel prices in the state being lower than in several others.

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Siddaramaiah said, "We have been saying that they will increase petrol and diesel prices after the elections." He added that the increase would affect the public. Petrol and diesel prices increased by Rs 3 per litre on Friday, marking the first hike in over four years amid rising global crude oil prices linked to the West Asia conflict. The Chief Minister also pointed to the rise in LPG cylinder prices since the NDA government came to power and said increasing fuel costs would further impact the prices of essential goods and normal life. **–BMB**

SC verdict revives push for Kannada in schools

Following the recent Supreme Court ruling supporting compulsory teaching of the local Rajasthani language in schools, demands have intensified in Karnataka to make Kannada learning mandatory from Classes 1 to 5 across all schools in the state.

The Kannada Development Authority has urged the government to fully implement the State Education Policy by giving top priority to Kannada in government, private, aided and central syllabus schools across the state.

However, experts pointed out that legal hurdles may remain because a 2014 Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court had ruled that no state government can force parents or students to study a particular language or medium of instruction.

Analysts say Karnataka may now have to approach the Supreme Court again to seek clarity by using the positive aspects of the Rajasthan verdict. **–BMB**

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BDA's housing trouble reaches breaking point

K-RERA gives BDA two-week deadline for registration amid allegations of delayed amenities, and missing approvals at B'luru housing project

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The Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority (K-RERA) directed the Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) to enable the formation of an Association of Allottees at the Gunjuru Housing Project Phases 1 and 2 in accordance with the law, and to transfer the common areas, including all original title documents, to the Association of Allottees.

K-RERA, while hearing a petition filed by Narayan Shetty, one of the allottees, stated that Phases 1 and 2 of the project are ongoing projects requiring regulation under Section 3 of the Act. "The promoter/developer is hereby directed to register the project within two weeks from the date of this order. Further, the respondent is directed to furnish an application for an occupancy certificate with regard to the said project in all aspects as agreed within 60 days from the date of this order," the judgment reads.

K-RERA also stated that the BDA is a promoter under Section 2(zk), and that the Gunjur Housing Project Phases 1 and 2 at BDA Apartment Phases 1 and 2, Balagere, Gunjur Palya Road, Gunjur, is a real estate project under Section 2(zn) of the Act.

BDA faces scrutiny over pending amenities at Gunjuru housing project

Homebuyers alleged stalled amenities, inactive sewage plant and unresolved electricity issues as the Authority s ordered project registration and title handover compliance

It further stated that the respondent (BDA), in response to the notice, appeared before the Authority through its counsel but did not contest the matter by filing a statement of objections or producing documents on its behalf. "So, nothing is forthcoming from the respondent, nor have any of these allegations been rebutted, and they remain unrebutted. An adverse inference is therefore liable to be drawn. The absence of rebuttal, coupled with documentary material and multiple similar complaints, clearly establishes the primary responsibility that the delay in completion and non-provision of amenities is attributable to the respondent, BDA," the judgment reads.

The complainant alleged that the allottees were not provided with occupancy certificates even though the complainant executed the sale deed for the flat on January 18, 2019. "The respondent (BDA) has not obtained the necessary no-objection certificates (NOCs) from various competent authorities. The BDA has not provided a permanent electricity connection to the building, and electricity connections are not in the names of the allottees to date. The STP, constructed four years ago, is yet to become operational due to a lack of electricity, and the lifts are also not functioning properly," the complainant said.

Meanwhile, Karnataka Home Buyers Forum Sanchalak Dhananjaya Padmanabhachar described the K-RERA judgment directing the BDA to transfer the common area title to the Association of Allottees as a wake-up call.

"We hope the government will take the necessary action for the transfer of the common area title to the association," he said.

Twin tunnel dreams stuck in traffic

Costly Bengaluru tunnel bid sparks delays, toll fears and environmental outrage as officials reassess financing and approval hurdles

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Bengaluru's long-awaited twin tunnel road project is facing fresh delays after the Adani Group, selected as the L-1 bidder, quoted ₹22,500 crore for the project, which is ₹4,720 crore higher than the government's estimated cost of ₹17,780.13 crore. The sharp escalation in the bid amount has forced the State government and senior officials into prolonged price negotiations, delaying the finalisation of the tender process and the issuance of the work order. Officials said Cabinet approval would also be required because of the substantially higher project cost, making an immediate start to construction unlikely. The ambitious six-lane "Twin Tube Tunnel" corridor is planned between Esteem Mall in Hebbal and Silk Board Junction, covering a total length of 16.74 kilometres.

Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Limited (B-SMILE) invited tenders for the project, which has been divided into two packages valued at ₹8,814.78 crore and ₹8,965.35 crore respectively. Along with the Adani Group, Vishva Samudra Engineering, Rail Vikas Nigam Limited and Dilip Buildcon participated in the bidding process. Vishva Samudra Engineering quoted ₹28,500 crore, making Adani the lowest bidder despite the significant increase over the estimated cost. Officials said the Adani Group sought nearly 32 per cent more than the original estimate for both packages, resulting in closer scrutiny of the proposal's financial structure.

Massive cost escalation, proposed Lalbagh land use and steep commuter charges intensify controversy surrounding Karnataka's ambitious underground traffic corridor project

Bengaluru's twin tunnel project faces delays amid soaring costs, toll concerns and Lalbagh controversy

An official said: "The project is being implemented under the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model, under which the selected company will construct, operate and maintain the tunnel road for 30 years. Authorities are currently examining how the company intends to finance the project, the loans it plans to secure, and the projected toll revenue model. The Karnataka government has committed to funding 40 per cent of the project cost under the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) model and plans to provide nearly ₹8,800 crore to the contractor. Loans have already been arranged from HUDCO at an annual interest rate of 8.95 per cent, while the government has extended guarantees for loans amounting to nearly ₹19,000 crore."

The proposed toll structure has also triggered public concern, with the government planning to charge ₹19 per kilometre for tunnel usage. This would require motorists to pay approximately ₹317 for travelling along the entire stretch one way. Even before construction has begun, the project has become mired in controversy, particularly over the proposed use of nearly six acres of land inside Bengaluru's iconic Lalbagh Botanical Garden for the tunnel's entry and exit points. Environmental activists have strongly opposed the move. Officials added that land acquisition and the identification of buildings for demolition are yet to begin, indicating that the project may continue to face delays even after the tender process is completed.

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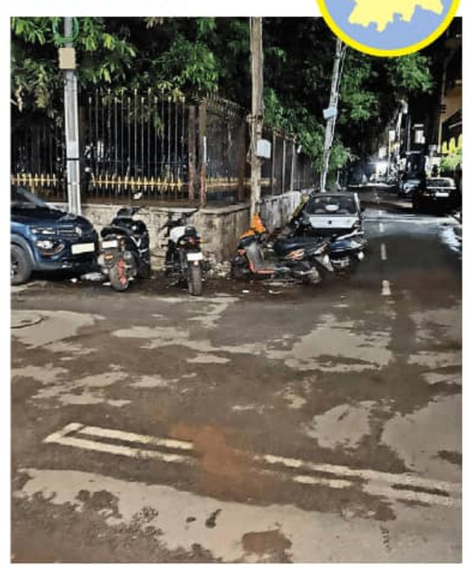
Road hazard
Sriramapuram

A damaged concrete slab at the junction of 4th Cross and 9th Main on Srirampuram Police Station Road, left unrestored by BWSSB after pipe-laying work carried out months ago, continues to inconvenience commuters.

In the dark
Austin Town


Residents of Anglo Indian Block in Austin Town have been facing complete darkness for the past week, with no action taken despite repeated complaints to officials.

Illegal encroachment
Krishna Rao Road

Illegal dumping and unauthorised parking of autorickshaws and heavy trucks near Samaj School on AN Krishna Rao Road have turned the once well-maintained street into a dirty and congested stretch.

Customs seize hydro ganja worth ₹7 crore

Customs officials seized 11.88 kg and 8.47 kg of Hydro Ganja worth Rs 4.16 crore and Rs 2.96 crore in two separate seizures at the Bengaluru Airport. Officials posted on X that the accused were arrested under the NDPS Act, 1985.

The officials found the Hydro Ganja concealed in baggage arriving from Bangkok.

The post stated that both seizures were made during separate airport checks, and further investigation is underway. —BMB

Thieves arrested, 10 vehicles retrieved

Srirampura Police seized 10 vehicles worth ₹2.9 lakh and arrested two persons in theft cases. A complaint was filed by a Ramachandrapura resident on April 28 after his two-wheeler went missing. Police identified two accused from Rosa Coast, Tamil Nadu, and arrested them on May 2. During interrogation, they confessed to thefts and revealed locations where stolen vehicles were parked, including Sanjay Nagar and Madanur. On May 11, both accused were remanded to judicial custody for further legal proceedings. —BMB

2 robbers nabbed; gold, phone recovered

KR Puram police arrested two persons and seized 47 grams of gold ornaments and a phone worth ₹6 lakh in a robbery case. The victim was approached by the accused under the pretext of asking about an address. His accomplice and he then forcibly took the victim to the Channasandra forest area. Police arrested the accused on February 25. On March 7, both were remanded to judicial custody while police continued tracing third accused and further investigation remains underway across multiple locations for links to robberies nearby. —BMB

Fraudsters in armed forces' garb swindle online buyers

Online scammers posing as Army officers are exploiting trust to cheat victims through fake payment confirmations and urgent transfer requests

Officials have urged citizens to verify identities carefully and report suspicious online transactions immediately through cybercrime helpline 1930 or official reporting portal

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With online buying and selling platforms gaining popularity, cybercriminals are increasingly exploiting public trust in Indian Armed Forces and paramilitary personnel to carry out frauds, police officials have warned. Though reported cases have declined, such frauds continue across Bengaluru and other states, prompting repeated police alerts.

According to police, fraudsters commonly pose Army officers, CRPF personnel, CISF staff, or other defence employees on platforms such as OLX, Quikr, and Facebook Marketplace to gain trust. They use profile photographs in uniform, fake identity cards, and images of military camps or vehicles to appear genuine.

Officials said these frauds often target people selling second-hand vehicles, furniture, electronics, mobile phones, and household items online. In many cases, accused contact sellers claim they are posted in another state or stationed at military camps and urgently need products. Victims often lower their guard and proceed without proper verification.

Karnataka State Police data shows 37 OLX fraud cases were reported till March 2026. In 2025, police recorded 187 OLX fraud cases and 30 FedEx-related scams. In 2024, 248 FedEx scams and 50 OLX fraud cases were reported. Earlier years recorded significantly higher OLX fraud numbers, with 467 cases in 2023 and 480 in 2022.

DCP G K Mithun Kumar (northeast) noted that many Bengaluru residents have lost substantial amounts in such scams. In March, Bengaluru-based firm UNICASE was allegedly duped over 26 lakh by cyber fraudsters posing as Border Security Force officials. According to police, the accused used fake purchase orders and bank transaction instructions to gain trust. They initially refunded a small amount at higher value before convincing company representatives to transfer larger sums to multiple accounts. Police have frozen beneficiary accounts and launch an investigation.

In another case last year, a 36-year-old man from Bengaluru lost ₹3.5 lakh after posting an online advertisement to rent out his 1BHK house in Devarachikkanahalli. According to Begur police, the accused posed as an Army officer and claimed Army authorities would pay rent and advance. He convinced the victim to transfer money under the pretext of reverse transaction system.

Police said these are not isolated scams. Fraudsters increasingly misuse identities of defence and paramilitary personnel in rental, property, and bulk purchase scams by sending fake payment confirmations and fraudulent advance transaction proofs.

Another common fraud involves matrimonial websites, where cybercriminals create fake profiles posing as Army personnel, build emotional trust, and later cheat victims of money, gold, or bank access.

In one such case, a 31-year-old software engineer in Electronics City lost ₹31.5 lakh to a fraudster identifying himself as Arsh Singh, claiming to be a former Indian Air Force commando and later an IB agent.

Police have advised citizens to verify identities before proceeding with transactions. Officials warned against unrealistically low prices, pressure for advance payments, fake identity proofs, sudden transfer excuses, and refusal for physical meetings. Suspicious frauds should be reported immediately through cybercrime helpline 1930 or online reporting portal.

Darshan trial: Slow progress triggers SC ire

The Supreme Court on Friday pulled up a Bengaluru court for the slow progress in the Renukaswamy murder trial involving Kannada actor Darshan and directed that proceedings be fast-tracked, possibly on a day-to-day basis without flimsy adjournments. A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and Vijay Bishnoi noted that despite charges being framed on November 3, 2025, the prosecution has examined only 10 witnesses in seven months from a priority list of 60 and an overall pool of 272.

The apex court warned that the current pace could prolong the trial and said it would monitor the case for one year, intervening if substantial progress is not made. It also directed defense counsel to cooperate and expedite cross-examinations.

The court further directed the Karnataka government to ensure Darshan receives all standard prison amenities legally available to an undertrial prisoner.

Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Darshan, claimed the actor was isolated in a quarantine cell. Senior Advocate Siddharth Luthra, representing the state, denied this, clarifying that Darshan is housed in a wing designated as a quarantine cell during the pandemic but is not restricted from interacting with inmates. —PTI

Police begin recruitment for 8,176 vacancies

The Police Department has begun recruitment to fill 8,176 vacant posts after delays caused by implementation of internal reservation policies. Karnataka Director General and Inspector General of Police Dr M A Saleem issued orders for the drive. Earlier, notifications for Armed Sub-Inspectors and 1,500 Civil Constable posts were issued in 2021, but hiring stalled after irregularities surfaced in recruitment for 545 and 402 PSI posts. Job aspirants protested across district centres for nearly three-and-a-half years, demanding fresh recruitment. The state government later introduced an internal reservation formula within the 15 per cent Scheduled Caste quota, allocating 5.25 per cent each to Categories A and B, and 4.5 per cent to Category C.

It also permanently increased the upper age limit for recruitment by five years due to prolonged delays and higher limits in neighbouring states. Constable age limit is now 30 for general candidates after years of stalled hiring statewide. —BMB

Yele Mallappa Shetty Lake sinks deeper under endless official apathy

Repeated inspections, memos and complaints fail to stop encroachment, debris dumping and unchecked hyacinth growth choking the lake

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Activists allege poor infrastructure and inadequate lake-cleaning efforts as hyacinth continues spreading rapidly across the polluted waterbody

Yele Mallappa Shetty Lake continues hitting the headlines for wrong reasons all these years but the authorities concerned remain apathetic or interested in only knee-jerk reactions rather than a permanent solution.

The latest such reaction is a memo issued by the Senior Environmental Officer (A/C) of the Waste Management Cell, Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), to the KSPCB Regional Officer, Mahadevapura.

"You are informed to submit a detailed Action Taken Report (ATR) along with inspection findings, photographs, and recommendations to the Board and BSWML Office within three days from the date of receipt of this letter," the memo reads.

The memo was issued on May 8 based on a public grievance received through the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) portal alleging pollution, encroachment and illegal dumping of construction debris in Yele Mallappa Shetty Lake by Doddabbanahalli and Avalahalli panchayats.

"In this regard, you are hereby directed to inspect the above said location immediately and verify the allegations made in the complaint. You are further directed to take necessary action as per the provisions of the applicable Acts and Rules," the memo reads.

However, lake activists and environmentalists are not ready to take the latest memo seriously as they have already seen such notices issued by authorities and elected representatives visiting Yele Mallappa Shetty Lake. They blame the authorities for failing to carry out follow-up action on such notices. They also criticise elected representatives for forgetting the very existence of the lake as soon as they leave the spot.

The latest grievance was lodged by Neetu K, a lake activist. "I am of the opinion that preserving water bodies is the responsibility of the authorities concerned. There is rampant dumping of debris but no action taken to prevent dumping debris," said Neetu.

Residents and activists accuse multiple agencies of neglecting long-pending restoration work, alleging poor infrastructure, delayed action and complete failure to prevent fresh pollution and illegal dumping despite repeated assurances

Subhajit Ghosh, a resident, also lodged a complaint (IGPRS No. 328783) on April 18, 2026, with the Karnataka Lake Conservation and Development Authority (KLCDA) regarding the delay in removing hyacinth from Yele Mallappa Shetty Lake. On April 27, the KLCDA CEO sought a detailed report on steps taken to remove hyacinth from the lake.

However, Subhajit Ghosh said that despite multiple follow-ups with Vasu, an engineer from Minor Irrigation, no progress has been made in clearing the water hyacinth.

"A timeline was given to clear it by March, but now they are saying it will take one year, which is absolutely unrealistic and unacceptable. The agency hired for cleaning the lake is also incapable because they are using only one JCB for a 500-acre lake. They lack proper infrastructure, and the fencing work is also not happening. Dumping garbage and debris has not stopped, despite an order from the Chief Minister's Office," he said.

Coming down heavily on the delay in cleaning the lake and preventing dumping of debris, Balaji Raghotham, a lake activist, said encroachment of lake land remains rampant but authorities have not acted against those responsible.

"Many authorities, including the Legislative Standing Committee on Local Bodies and Panchayat Raj, inspected Yele Mallappa Shetty Lake last July, but nothing has been done to prevent encroachment of lake land even after 10 months of their visit," said Balaji Raghotham.

Meanwhile, the KSPCB Regional Officer (Mahadevapura) said he would visit the lake and submit the report soon.

6,500 rural libraries shut, project stalled

A major rural library initiative launched in the State to promote reading habits among village children and provide urban-level knowledge resources has come to a halt within months of its launch. More than 6,500 rural libraries established under a ₹263.96-crore project have remained closed for the past six months, reportedly due to revised government guidelines that are yet to be finalised.

The project, implemented under the Centre's Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment, received administrative approval on January 31, 2025, to set up 6,599 libraries across gram panchayat limits with digital infrastructure and learning facilities for rural youth and students. Libraries set up in villages now remain shut, leaving lakhs of books unused and aspirants without learning spaces or resources. **–BMB**

Kidwai crosses 1,100 free robotic surgeries

Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology has successfully conducted 1,146 robotic surgeries, with free robotic procedures being offered to Below Poverty Line (BPL) cardholders, Director Dr T Naveen said during the "Kidwai Surgical Oncology Conference" held at Infosys Hall on Friday.

He said the institute's growth and global recognition were driven by the dedication of its doctors and staff. Highlighting Kidwai's 50-year legacy in cancer care, he noted that the hospital has adopted several advanced medical technologies and continues to expand its branches across Karnataka with government support.

Padma Shri awardee Vijayalakshmi Deshmane said live surgical demonstrations help medical students and doctors improve their skills, confidence and treatment expertise. Former director Prabhakar said the hospital is steadily progressing by adopting modern medical technologies and expanding healthcare facilities.

The conference featured live surgery demonstrations and discussions attended by over 200 doctors and postgraduate medical students. **–BMB**

No choice in the matter of waste

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

He added that this translates into an additional burden of around Rs 212 per flat per month for 108 flats, directly impacting maintenance charges. "We requested the new vendor to negotiate and increase it only marginally, but that was not acceptable. Since only empanelled vendors are allowed, apartment associations in East Bengaluru are left with no alternative. The monopoly-like system is directly increasing maintenance costs," he said.

Shatrunjay Sharan, a resident of Bagalagunte, said residents are already feeling the pressure of rising charges. "Earlier we had multiple vendors and could negotiate based on service quality and price. Now we are forced into a single-vendor system with no transparency in pricing. The sudden jump in cost is unsustainable for many apartments, especially when maintenance budgets are already tight," he said.

The controversy follows the formation of the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML), after which waste collection systems for apartments and bulk generators were reorganised. Residents allege that in many areas, only one vendor has been empanelled, effectively removing competition. Apartment associations claim that these authorised vendors charge nearly three to four times higher rates than earlier service providers while also raising concerns about service quality and accountability.

What has further angered residents is the alleged linkage between waste collection compliance and property taxation. According to apartment associations, the Self Assessment Scheme (SAS) form under the GBA now includes disclosure of the contracted waste vendor. Residents allege that failure to use empanelled vendors could lead to additional solid waste management charges being levied through property tax assessments.

> **"Apartment residents in our area are all up in arms. They are now at the mercy of this one vendor who overcharges. Creating such monopolies is also illegal**
>
> – Sandeep Anirudhan, Citizens' Agenda for Bengaluru

Monopoly claims

Sandeep Anirudhan of Citizens' Agenda for Bengaluru told BM apartment residents were furious over what they described as an unfair and coercive arrangement. "Apartment residents in our area are all up in arms. They are now at the mercy of this one vendor who overcharges. Creating such monopolies is also illegal. There must be multiple vendors under transparent empanelment norms. This decision appears suspicious," he said. Residents also argue that many existing private vendors functioned efficiently for years and that apartment complexes should have the freedom to continue with operators of their choice instead of being compelled to shift to newly empanelled agencies.

Shachi Pathak (who manages social media groups of residents of CV Raman Nagar and KR Puram areas) said RWAs were concerned. "Earlier, people had the freedom to choose vendors, but now there is effectively only one operator in many areas. This has led to complaints about high pricing, poor accountability and service issues," she said.

The allegations have also spilled into the political arena. Expelled BJP leader Basanagouda Patil Yatnal had earlier written to the Lokayukta alleging irregularities and favouritism in solid waste management tenders in north and south Bengaluru. However, the Karnataka government has denied wrongdoing. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar defended the reforms, stating that a "trash mafia" had long controlled the system and that the new structure aims to clean up waste management in the city.

Managed plots and agro-integrated estates drive new real estate trend

The real estate market is witnessing a growing shift toward ready-to-build managed plots, with a notable rise in demand for agro-integrated developments featuring coffee and pepper farm plots.

Developers are increasingly offering curated land parcels that combine residential convenience with agricultural utility, catering to investors seeking lifestyle-oriented and income-generating assets.

These managed plot communities typically come with pre-approved layouts, boundary demarcation, internal roads, water supply, electricity and security infrastructure. The inclusion of plantation-based farm plots, particularly coffee

and pepper estates has added a unique investment appeal, especially among buyers interested in sustainable and long-term agricultural returns.

Industry experts note that this trend is driven by urban investors looking for alternatives to traditional apartments and volatile financial instruments.

The promise of weekend homes within landscaped estates, combined with the potential yield from high-value crops like coffee and pepper, is reshaping buyer preferences. **BMB**

B'luru leads India's Grade A office surge

Bengaluru has emerged as the central growth engine of India's Grade A office market, anchoring a nationwide leasing boom that touched a record 58.2 Mn sq ft in 2025 across the top seven cities—up 17 per cent YoY, the strongest performance ever recorded. Alongside Hyderabad and Chennai, Bengaluru accounted for half of the country's total absorption. GCCs have rapidly become the dominant demand driver, expanding their share of gross leasing from 36 per cent in 2024 to 47 per cent in Q1 2026. Bengaluru alone contributed about 40 per cent of GCC leasing in Q1 2026, reinforcing its position as India's premier corporate real estate hub.

This demand surge has tightened Grade A vacancy levels to 15.5 per cent in Q1 2026 while mid-tier and secondary assets continue to struggle with persistently higher vacancies of 20–25 per cent and weakening occupier interest. Rentals have also firmed up, with Grade A office rates rising to around Rs 93 per sq ft monthly in Q1 2026. Bengaluru is leading the pack with double-digit growth and a clear willingness among occupiers to pay up to a 20 per cent premium for better infrastructure, ESG compliance and GCC-ready facilities. **BMB**

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Bengaluru leads India in office space leasing

Bengaluru recorded the highest office leasing activity in the country during the first quarter of 2026, with transactions of 9.2 million sq ft across commercial office spaces, according to a report by Knight Frank India. Of the total leasing activity in the city, 7 million sq ft came from large office spaces measuring over 100,000 sq ft, accounting for 77 per cent of overall transactions. The report stated that Bengaluru remained the leading market for large office deals among the country's eight major

office markets during the quarter. Mid-sized office spaces between 50,000 sq ft and 100,000 sq ft accounted for 1.5 million sq ft of leasing activity in the city, while smaller office spaces below 50,000 sq ft recorded transactions of 0.7 million sq ft.

The report said demand for large office spaces continued to be driven by Global Capability Centres (GCCs), technology firms and multinational companies expanding operations in India. Hyderabad ranked second after Bengaluru with 4.4 million sq ft of large office transactions, followed by Mumbai with 2.9 million sq ft. Across India, office spaces larger than 100,000 sq ft accounted for 19.5 million sq ft of leasing during Q1 2026, making up 65 per cent of total office transactions in major cities. **BMB**

India's mall leasing boom emerges in B'luru

Bengaluru continues to strengthen its position as one of India's most resilient and high-potential retail real estate markets, with Grade A/A+ malls maintaining healthy vacancy levels of just 5–8 per cent and average rentals holding steady at Rs 200–250 per sq ft, according to the latest ANAROCK-IMAGES report. The city is expected to add nearly 5 million sq ft of new retail supply by 2031, with major expansion activity concentrated along high-growth corridors such as

Sarjapur Road, East Bengaluru and South Bengaluru.

Strong leasing traction from anchor brands including Lifestyle and Westside, coupled with sustained consumer demand, continues to reinforce Bengaluru's status as a stable, high-growth organised retail destination.

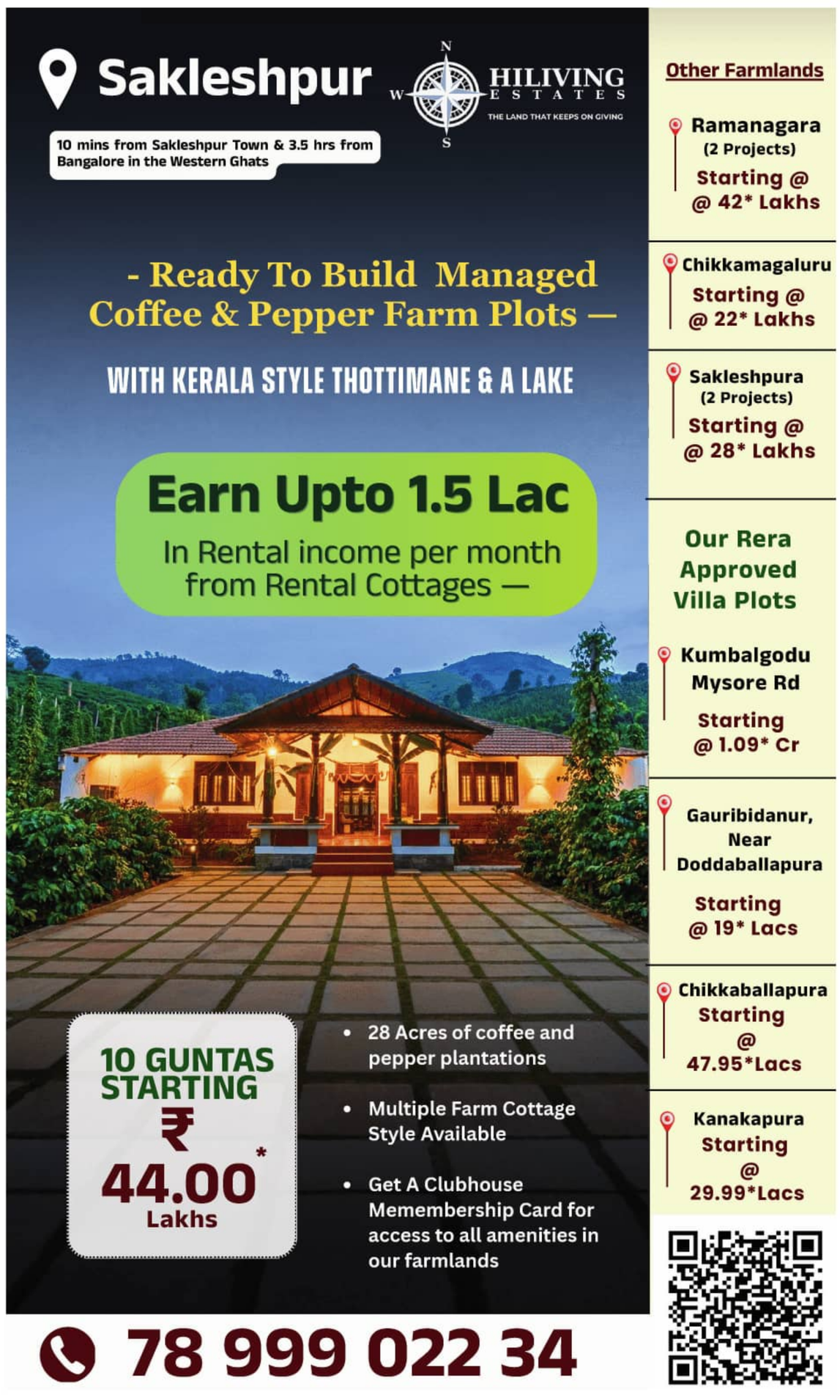
The report comes amid a broader nationwide retail surge, with Delhi-NCR malls nearing full occupancy at 0–2 per cent vacancy and Mumbai recording rental appreciation of 15–20 per cent YoY. More than 45 million sq ft of new retail supply is expected across India's top seven cities between 2026 and 2031, while institutional-grade retail assets present an estimated USD 25–30 billion investment opportunity. **BMB**

City sees surge in large-format jewellery stores

CBRE India has identified Bengaluru as one of India's fastest-growing markets for large-format jewellery retail stores, as brands increasingly shift from traditional showrooms to premium experience-led outlets. According to CBRE's latest report 'All that Glitters: Jewellery Brands Recast India's Retail Footprint', Bengaluru accounted for 14 per cent of the country's jewellery retail leasing activity in 2025, making it one of the top five jewellery retail hubs alongside Hyderabad, Chennai, Delhi-NCR and Mumbai. The report noted that jewellery retailers are rapidly adopting stores larger than 8,000 sq ft, with the share of such large-format outlets rising from 14 per cent in 2019 to 50 per cent in 2025.

The report said jewellery has emerged as one of India's top retail leasing demand drivers this year after fashion and food & beverage, with the sector's share in organised retail leasing increasing from 2 per cent in 2019 to 8 per cent in 2025.

New-age jewellery outlets now incorporate VIP bridal lounges, AR-powered virtual try-on zones and personalised consultation spaces to attract premium consumers. **BMB**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BENGALURU SPEAKS

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STORYBEHINDTHEPHOTO

OPENBILL SCENIC PERCH

Our reader shares a striking image of an Asian Openbill perched high above the scenic Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary, overlooking the vast expanse of the Cauvery River. Captured from a lofty vantage point, the bird's calm presence against the flowing waters beautifully reflects the serenity and rich biodiversity of the sanctuary.

The picture was clicked by reader
N J Ravi Chander

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com**

Ejipura flyover audit flags massive irregularities, delays and defects

Nine-year-old flyover project faces fresh scrutiny over inflated costs, pending recoveries, defective structures and delayed completion timelines

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There seems to be no end to controversies surrounding the Ejipura flyover as the 2023–24 audit report points out multiple lapses in the revised cost estimates prepared to complete the remaining work. The auditors have raised objections amounting to 8.80 crore, highlighting financial and procedural irregularities in the project that has already been delayed for nearly nine years.

As per the report, the 2.5-km flyover, aimed at easing traffic congestion along the busy Koramangala 100 Feet Road stretch, was originally awarded in 2017 at a cost of 203.20 crore. However, the contractor, Simplex Infrastructure Limited, failed to complete the work despite multiple deadline extensions, leading to termination of the contract. Following this, a revised estimate was prepared to complete the pending work, but the audit report noted several discrepancies in the process.

One major issue flagged was the mobilisation advance of 8.50 crore paid earlier, which has now come under objection. The revised estimate prepared by the civic body's project division pegged the cost at 143.80 crore based on earlier schedule of rates and updated material prices. However, the contract was eventually awarded to another firm for 176.11 crore, raising questions over cost escalation and calculation methods.

The audit also pointed to inconsistencies in material estimation. There were deviations in concrete usage and pricing benchmarks, while overlapping charges such as overhead costs and contractor profit margins were accounted for separately. These factors reportedly increased the financial burden on the civic body. The total revised project cost has now risen to 307.96 crore after government approval.

The report also highlighted a major pending recovery from the previous contractor. After terminating the contract, authorities estimated total losses, including penalties and interest, at 123.31 crore. While some amounts were recovered through deposits, unpaid bills and seized equipment, a balance of 102.91 crore remains unpaid. Despite official notices issued in December 2024, the contractor has not responded, prompting recommendations for legal action.

Further concerns were raised over construction quality. Out of several unused structural segments, technical defects were found in many, including cracks noticed during transport. Auditors termed this evidence of substandard work and recommended blacklisting the contractor as well as the project management consultants, besides action against officials responsible for oversight lapses. The project faced repeated setbacks in awarding pending work contracts. After multiple failed tenders, a single bidder secured the project, but progress remains slow.

Despite repeated tender attempts and revised estimates, progress on the controversial Ejipura flyover project remains painfully slow

DID YOU KNOW?

NASA's Psyche probe was headed for a close encounter with Mars on Friday and a planned gravity boost to set the spacecraft on its final course to the solar system's largest known metallic asteroid, thought to be the remnant core of an ancient protoplanet.

The Psyche probe, named after the asteroid it aims to explore, launched in October 2023 on a 2.2-billion-mile journey and is expected to reach the outer fringes of the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter in 2029. NASA said the spacecraft would pass within 2,800 miles of Mars at a speed of 12,333 miles per hour, using the planet's gravity to accelerate and adjust its trajectory. Mars flyby also allows mission teams to conserve xenon gas used in the spacecraft's solar-electric ion thruster system. Scientists plan to calibrate onboard instruments and test specialised cameras during the encounter. "We are now exactly on target for the flyby," Sarah Bairstow, Psyche mission planning chief at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, said in an online statement. Scientists believe the asteroid mainly contains iron, nickel and other metals and may represent the frozen core of an ancient planet destroyed during the early formation of the solar system. — Reuters

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MEA issues fake news alert, debunks evacuation claim through Fujairah port

THE CLAIM: Social media posts and fabricated reports falsely claimed India and UAE were planning evacuations through Fujairah port, while AI-generated videos alleged India admitted losing Rafale jets and altering Pakistan's water supply.

FACT: MEA and PIB Fact Check confirmed these claims are completely false, clarified no evacuation plans exist, and stated the viral Randhir Jaiswal video was AI-generated misinformation spread through propaganda accounts.

India's Ministry of External Affairs' (MEA) official fact-checking handle has strongly debunked multiple false claims circulating on social media, calling them fabricated and misleading attempts to spread disinformation about India's foreign policy and defence matters.

In a clear rebuttal, the MEA's official fact-check handle issued a "Fake News Alert" denying reports that India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were working on any evacuation arrangement through Fujairah port for Indian nationals abroad.

A widely circulated report by The Times of India had claimed that both countries were planning an agreement to facilitate the evacuation of lakhs of Indian workers through the UAE port.

India, UAE working on pact to help in evacuation of Indians via Fujairah por

New Delhi: India and the UAE are working on [illegible] that will help in evacuation of lakhs of Indian workers caught in the [illegible] in the already strong ties between the two countries.

The PM is due to leave for Europe on May 15 with a stopover in Fujairah and then depart for the Netherlands, before visiting Sweden, Norway and Italy.

The first-of-its-kind treaty comes amid disruptions caused by the West Asia conflict, which saw the UAE [illegible] in the Gulf amid flight getting affected. While [illegible] slowly returning to normal, the pact can be useful in future as Fujairah is west of the Strait of Hormuz, which has emerged as the main chokepoint in the war. In case of problems

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Iran responds to US's late proposal, after drones threaten several Gulf targets; Tehran warns it will not hold back from retaliating against any new US strikes

Drone strike briefly sets cargo vessel afire in Persian Gulf. The ship from Abu Dhabi continues to Qatar port after blaze is doused

Israeli forces establish a makeshift base [illegible] in Iraq's desert

Iranian oil terminals to [illegible] reports [illegible] oil [illegible] With air traffic [illegible] working in the UAE [illegible] evacuated by ship, according to govt's calculations. TNN

Continued on P 16

FAKE
FAKE

The fact-check post stated: "There is no basis in fact for such a story. There is no evacuation being planned. Please stay alert against such false and baseless claims." Officials clarified that no such discussions or agreements exist between India and the UAE regarding evacuation through Fujairah or any similar arrangement.

The post also shared a newspaper clipping carrying the headline: "India, UAE working on pact to help in evacuation of Indians via Fujairah port."

In a separate warning, the MEA also flagged a "Deepfake Video Alert" after an AI-generated clip falsely showing MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal began circulating on social media.

The manipulated video falsely claimed that India had admitted to losing Rafale fighter jets and made other misleading allegations, including claims related to water flow to Pakistan. The MEA categorically rejected the video as fake, stating that the spokesperson had never made such statements. The advisory said: "This is an AI-generated video intended to spread disinformation! Please stay alert against such fake videos and content on social media."

The Press Information Bureau's fact-check unit, PIB Fact Check, also confirmed that the video was digitally altered and part of a coordinated misinformation campaign. It further urged citizens not to believe or share manipulated content and to verify all information only through official government sources.

PIB Fact Check added that the original, unedited video of the MEA briefing is publicly available and can be accessed through official platforms, reinforcing that no such remarks were ever made.

Officials noted that several Pakistan-based propaganda accounts were behind the circulation of these misleading videos and fabricated headlines, aiming to distort facts and damage India's international image.

Authorities have once again appealed to citizens to remain vigilant, avoid sharing unverified content, and rely only on authenticated government communications for accurate information. —IANS

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Recycling of decommisioned EVMs, VVPAT units: Case in court

The Karnataka High Court recently heard an appeal challenging a single judge's refusal to interfere with a tender condition that limits participation in the recycling of decommissioned Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and VVPAT units to companies with recycling facilities located within Karnataka.

During the hearing, counsel representing Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) defended the condition, arguing that the disposal of EVMs involves sensitive material and requires close supervision throughout the recycling process.

BEL submitted before the division bench that transporting the machines outside the State could create risks, stating that "anything can happen in transit." The company argued that the tender conditions were framed keeping in mind environmental safeguards and the need for regulatory oversight.

The dispute arose from a tender issued for the crushing and recycling of obsolete EVMs and VVPAT units. An e-waste recycling company had challenged clauses requiring bidders to have recycling facilities in Karnataka along with approvals from the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB).

Earlier, a single judge bench led by Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum upheld the tender conditions, observing that the nature of the equipment justified stricter eligibility requirements.

The court held that the conditions could not be termed arbitrary or discriminatory merely because some bidders became ineligible due to the criteria.

The petitioner company argued that the restriction unfairly excluded recyclers operating outside Karnataka, despite laws permitting interstate transportation of e-waste.

It also claimed to have previously undertaken similar assignments, including earlier contracts awarded by BEL. **BMB**

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, HARSHITA, Residing at Flat #2154, Prestige Shantiniketan Apt, Whitefield, Bengaluru – 560048, have changed my name to HARSHITA JAISWANI, vide affidavit dated 06/05/2026, sworn before notary Venkataraju H G, Bangalore.

I, Sunil Madiwalar, R/o #Janatha colony, hulkoti, gadag - 582205, have changed my name to Sunil Hanumantappa Madivalar

I, Akshat Gupta R/o C1004, Keya Around The Life, Sy No. 90, Seegehalli, Bengaluru, Ka 560067 have changed my minor daughter's name from Avni to Avni Gupta.

I,YESHWANTH T R/o No 841, 4th Main, 6th Cross, E and F block Ramakrishna Nagar Mysuru-570022 have changed my name to YASHWANTH T. I shall be called by this name for all purposes

I, SUNIL KALAIAH HIREMATH S/o Kalaiah H Agd 51 Yrs R/at 75, 2nd H Crs, 11th Blk, 2nd Stg, Ngrbvi, Blr-72, hv Changed my name as SUNIL KUMAR HIREMATH KALAIAH Vide affidavit dt: 13/5/26 Sworn to Notary Sakalesh Blr.

I, MOHAMMED WAHJ RABANI, R/a,#23, 2nd Flr, 2nd Main, 5th Crs, Dinnur, RT Nagar Bangalore– 32. I, have Changed my name to MOHAMMED VAHAJ RABBANI, Vide affidavit, dated 14/05/2026 Sworn before notary G Dayananda Bangalore

I Mohammad Subhani Begum or SubhaniBegum MD or Subhani Begum Patan W/O, Patan Mohammad Rafi R/o F#106, Sapthagiri Lotus, 2nd Main Rd, Coconut Garden, Ayyappa Nagar, Kr Puram, Bangalore-560036 have changed my name to Patan Subhani

I, IMPU CHARAN, D/o Charan C S, residing at No.38, Thampu, Adithya Blossom, Bharath Nagar 2nd Stage, Near East West Girls Hostel, Opposite Bilekallu Bus Stop, Herohalli, Bengaluru-560091. I have changed my name to IMPU C CHINNADUPPARIGE, vide affidavit dt: 15-05-2026, before notary Renuka C , Bengaluru.

I, Somanath U, R/o #78/8, 9th Cross 15th Main, JC Nagar, Kurubarahalli, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560086, have changed my name to Somnath U.

I, Deepak Raj (Old Name), S/o Raju. R, aged about 35 yrs, R/a No. 1060/1, 2nd Floor, 2nd Main Rd, 5th Cross, Yeshwantpura, Bangalore - 560022 do hereby declare that I have changed my name from Deepak Raj (Old Name) to Deepak Raaj Iyer (New Name) vide affidavit dated 08.05.2026 sworn before notary Chandrakala.

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Go for gold
Asian Boxing U15 & U17 C'ships 2026: India secures two gold; U-17 girls lead with 12 medals

LSG turns chase into cakewalk

Kartik top-scores with 71, Dube's late fireworks lift CSK to 187/5 against LSG

Lucknow Super Giants' Mitchell Marsh and Josh Inglis celebrate their partnership during the Indian Premier League 2026 match against Chennai Super Kings at Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium, in Lucknow on Friday; Chennai Super Kings' Shivam Dube and Prashant Veer celebrate their partnership

Kartik Sharma registered his career-best score of 71 in T20 cricket, while Shivam Dube produced late fireworks to take 23 runs off the final over, as the duo lifted Chennai Super Kings to 187/5 in their 20 overs against Lucknow Super Giants at the BRSABV Ekana Cricket Stadium on Friday. However, this proved to be too little when LSG started the chase as openers Mitchell Marsh and Josh Inglis took complete control over the match with superb knocks.

CSK innings

On a red soil pitch, Kartik overcame a sluggish start to hit 71 off 42 balls laced with six fours and five sixes at a strike-rate of 169/05. It was a dazzling knock where Kartik took on every LSG pacer after Akash Singh took out the CSK top-order quickly.

Dube then brought out the big shots to hit an unbeaten 32 off 16 balls, laced with three fours and two sixes, while Prashant Veer also made 13 not out off 10 deliveries and ensured CSK posted a competitive total by getting 60 runs off the last five overs.

Opting to bat first, CSK were off to a brisk start as Samson cracked three boundaries in the opening over off Mohammed Shami. Ruturaj Gaikwad too found the ropes against Akash Singh, but the left-arm seamer struck back quickly. He hurried Gaikwad on the pull and had him caught at mid-on, while Samson couldn't keep a flick out and holed out in the deep.

Urvil Patel's stay was brief, as Akash had him pulling to deep mid-wicket to leave CSK in trouble. At 52/3, Dewald Brevis joined Kartik and the pair stitched together a vital 70-run stand off 44 balls. Brevis announced himself with a six off Akash and added 25 off 16 balls before Shami's short ball had him caught at fine leg.

Kartik, meanwhile, grew in confidence with every boundary coming off his bat and his risks paying off. He reached his second fifty of the season off 35 balls with a towering six off Shami and continued to punish Shahbaz Ahmed and Prince Yadav with a flurry of boundaries. Shahbaz eventually ended his stay, but not before Kartik had given CSK the platform they needed.

Shivam and Prashant initially struggled against Mayank Yadav's pace, but found their rhythm in the last two overs. Veer chipped in with an inventive scoop off Shami giving him four, while Dube unleashed his by smashing Prince Yadav for two sixes and two fours on the last four balls of the innings and script a brilliant finish of CSK's roller coaster innings. —IANS

Today's battle
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Karnataka Open: Kriish Tyagi's impressive run ends in semis

Kriish Tyagi of India at ATP tennis at SM Krishna tennis stadium in Bengaluru on Friday

Bengaluru teenager Kriish Tyagi's inspiring run at the Karnataka Open ATP Challenger men's singles event ended in the semifinals as he lost to Australia's Philip Sekulic here on Friday.

Sekulic will face top seed American Keegan Smith who defeated Ilya Ivashka of Belarus in the other semifinal.

All eyes were on the 19-year-old wild card entrant Kriish after his stunning quarterfinal upset over World No. 328 and second seed Hamish Stewart.

But against the experienced fourth seed Sekulic, Kriish found the challenge a step too far, going down 0-6, 2-6.

The scoreline, however, did not fully reflect the fight the Bengaluru youngster displayed in patches during the semifinal.

Sekulic broke the Indian's serve in the second, fourth and sixth games to complete a one-sided 6-0 opening set, using his depth and precision to deny Kriish opportunities to dictate with his forehand.

The second set began with promise as Kriish appeared to rediscover his range.

The rallies became longer, and the Indian held his own from the baseline and matched his opponent through the early exchanges.

But Sekulic broke Kriish in the sixth game and once again in the eighth to close out the match 6-2 and advance to the final.

Earlier, top seed Keegan Smith continued his impressive run, defeating former World No. 40 Ilya Ivashka 6-4, 6-4.

In the doubles, India's challenge narrowed to one pair as Niki Kaliyanda Poonacha and Saketh Myneni defeated top seeds S D Prajwal Dev and Nitin Kumar Sinha 7-5, 6-1 to enter the final.

Adil Kalyanpur and Mukund Sasikumar fought hard but lost to Petr Bar Biryukov and Grigoriy Lomakin in two tie-break sets. —PTI

HIGHLIGHTS

Sakshi stuns world champion Meenakshi, secures India berth for CWG, Asiad

Sakshi Chaudhary, who defeated two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen in the semifinal of the national boxing trials, made the cut for the Indian team for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and the Asian Games to be held in Japan later this year.

She defeated the reigning world and Asian champion in the 48kg division, Meenakshi Hooda, who moved up to 51kg, in the final here at NIS Patiala on Friday. Sakshi, who won gold in the 54 kg category at the 2025 World Boxing Cup in Astana, dropped down to 51 kg for the trials.

The boxer who loses the final will be selected for the World Boxing Cup in Guiyang, China, from June 15 to 20, while the winner earns quotas for the two quadrennial events.

Earlier, Sakshi stunned Nikhat, who won the World Championships twice and gold in the Commonwealth Games and bronze in the Asian Games, while Meenakshi knocked out former world champion Neetu Ghanghas.

The 51kg category will have a new representative from the country top stars; Nikhat and Nitu crashed out.

Nikhat was forced to take part in the trials after she failed to secure a direct entry during last month's Asian Championships in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

She had reached the semifinals in the continental meet but went down tamely 0-5 to China's Wu Yu, the reigning Olympic gold medallist. —IANS

Thailand Open: Satwik-enter semis; Sindhu loses to Yamaguchi

India's top men's doubles pair, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, moved into the semifinals of the Thailand Open with a strong victory in Bangkok on Friday.

Meanwhile, PV Sindhu faced a quarterfinal exit after losing a tough match against Japan's Akane Yamaguchi.

Later on Friday, Lakshya Sen was set to compete against reigning champion and home favourite Kunlavut Vitidsarn in the men's singles quarterfinals.

The top-seeded Indian men's doubles team dominated Japan's Takumi Nomura and Yuichi Shimogami, winning 21-12, 21-13 in just 41 minutes. This marks their first semifinal appearance at a BWF World Tour event in 2026.

Playing against the world No. 34 Japanese pair for the first time, Satwik and Chirag were in full control from the start. They jumped to an impressive 10-0 lead in the first game before Nomura and Shimogami finally scored.

Although the sixth-seeded Japanese pair made a brief comeback after the interval and cut the lead to four points at 10-14, the Indian duo quickly regained their edge to finish the opening game with ease. —IANS

ARE YOU HUMAN ENOUGH?

More and more websites want proof you're human. Blame the bots

You're trying to book concert tickets before they sell out. You click the link and before you can make the payment, you're asked to identify traffic lights, bicycles or blurry crosswalks in a grid of tiny images.

Again.

For many people, this has become a routine part of life. Logging into financial apps, shopping online or creating accounts increasingly involves "proving you are human".

These systems are known as CAPTCHA. Why are they everywhere?

The short answer is that websites are fighting a rapidly escalating war against bots: automated software that imitate human behaviour online. And thanks to advances in artificial intelligence (AI), those bots are becoming even smarter, cheaper and harder to detect than ever before.

Why websites need proof you are human

Huge amounts of online traffic now come from automated systems. Some are helpful, such as search engine crawlers indexing pages for Google search.

Others are far less welcome, and may involve phishing, spam, fake accounts, passwords violation, misinformation, and distributed denial of service attacks overloading web servers. In some areas, AI agents now generate automated online traffic that exceeds human traffic altogether. Modern AI systems can generate convincing text, imitate browsing patterns and even solve some CAPTCHA puzzles.

At the same time, companies are increasingly worried about bots scraping online content to train AI systems.

As a result, more websites are adding verification systems simply to keep abuse under control.

How CAPTCHA actually works

CAPTCHA stands for "Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart". The original idea was simple: give users a task humans find easy, but computers find difficult.

Early CAPTCHA systems often involved distorted text. Later versions switched to image-recognition tasks such as selecting all the squares containing traffic lights or bicycles.

Google's reCAPTCHA became one of the best-known examples. Earlier versions even helped digitise books and improve street-view image recognition while users solved puzzles.

But computer vision has improved rapidly in recent years. Advances in AI mean bots can now solve many traditional CAPTCHA challenges surprisingly well. Researchers have repeatedly shown that modern AI systems can bypass some CAPTCHA systems with high success rates.

That is why today's CAPTCHA systems rely less on puzzles and more on behavioural analysis.

When users click the CAPTCHA link, the system analyses many background signals, such as mouse movements, typing speed, IP addresses, device information, and interaction timing that reflect human behaviours. Humans tend to behave in inconsistent ways. Bots are usually more predictable.

If the system is sufficiently confident you are human, you may never see an image puzzle at all. But if something appears suspicious, the system may trigger harder tests.

Moving beyond traditional CAPTCHA puzzles

While some bots now use AI capable of solving image-recognition tasks, others simply outsource CAPTCHA solving to cheap human labour services, where real people complete challenges for a small payment.

This has turned CAPTCHA into an ongoing arms race. That may explain why CAPTCHA tests often feel harder and more frustrating than they used to.

As AI continues to improve, websites will likely move beyond traditional CAPTCHA puzzles. Future systems may increasingly rely on behavioural biometrics, such as typing rhythm or scrolling style, device verification systems, invisible background risk scoring, and AI systems designed to detect other AI systems.

In many cases, users may no longer even notice the verification process happening.

CAPTCHA tests may seem like a minor annoyance, but they reflect a much larger paradigm shift online.

For decades, websites largely assumed visitors were human. Increasingly, that assumption no longer holds. As AI-generated traffic continues to grow, proving we are human online may become an even more common part of everyday life.

(By Yang Xiang, Swinburne University of Technology, The Conversation)

MIRRORLIGHTS

No clear autism link to antidepressant use during pregnancy, large study finds

The use of antidepressants while pregnant does not raise the children's risk for developmental disorders such as autism, according to an analysis of data from more than 25 million pregnancies that appears to contradict assertions by U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Kennedy has said, without evidence, that certain antidepressants pose such a risk to fetuses, and has also linked vaccines to autism, a debunked theory contrary to established science. The causes of autism are unclear. Scientists speculate that its neurological characteristics may develop in utero, when the fetal brain is being wired.

"Our study provides reassuring evidence that commonly used antidepressants do not increase the risk of neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children," study leader Dr. Wing-Chung Chang of the University of Hong Kong said in a statement.

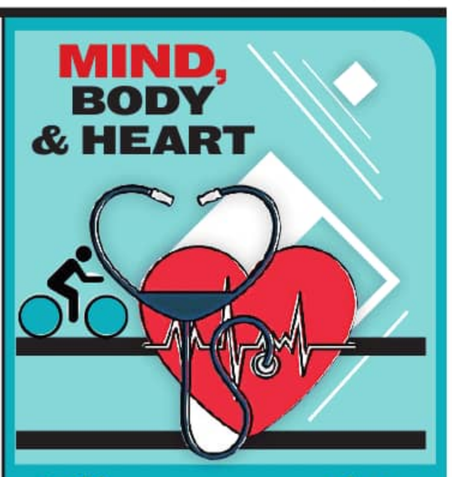
The researchers analysed data from 37 earlier studies involving nearly 650,000 pregnancies with antidepressant use and nearly 25 million unexposed pregnancies.

Children of mothers who took antidepressants in pregnancy were slightly more likely to be diagnosed with autism or ADHD, they found. But the associations became significantly weaker, or statistically insignificant, after accounting for mothers' mental health, family history, genetics, and other variables that could increase the risk of neurodevelopmental disorders, the researchers reported in The Lancet Psychiatry.

"This is a really important point that is easy to get wrong," Dr. James Walker, professor emeritus of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Leeds, who was not involved in the study, said in a statement.

"If you simply compare children whose mothers took antidepressants with children whose mothers did not, you may find a difference. But that does not mean the medicine caused the difference," Walker said.

Higher risks for autism and ADHD were also seen in children whose fathers used antidepressants while mothers were pregnant, and in those whose mothers had used them before, but not during, pregnancy, further suggesting that use in pregnancy did not explain the increased risks, the researchers said. **—Reuters**



All you need to know about...

Glimmers

What are they?
Glimmers are small experiences of pleasure that happen during simple, everyday activities, such as noticing a flower, listening to the rain, or watching the sun rise or set. The term 'glimmers' was first introduced by social worker Deb Dana in her work with trauma survivors. She noticed that, while people were good at journaling about their triggers, they were not paying enough attention to the tiny moments that made their nervous system feel safe – and they should. "The thing I love about glimmers is they're small, they're gentle, and yet they powerfully shape our system toward safety and connection," she wrote.

Opposite of triggers
Triggers activate your sympathetic nervous system – causing the fight-or-flight response. Glimmers, on the other hand, activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which acts as the body's natural relaxation response. Glimmers signal to your nervous system that you can relax because you're safe.

Teach your body to rest
Psychologist Jyotika Bedi, Founder of Happiness is Love, 2x TEDx speaker, relationships coach, wellbeing and mindset mentor, and author, agrees. "Many women I work with tell me the same thing, 'I'm constantly holding things together but I never feel rested'," she reveals. "In a world that keeps women alert and on edge, noticing glimmers is not a luxury. It is how we teach our body that rest, repair, connection, and calm are allowed."

How to recognise a glimmer
You might feel a momentary sense of ease, a deeper breath, or a subtle softening in your chest – all sensations that signal that your body knows it's okay right now.

— Femina

 # Looking for Bond
James Bond auditions officially begin; Nina Gold joins search for next 007

Wooing in white

After sharing two striking appearances from the French Riviera, the actress has now unveiled her third look. Tara is among the honorees at the Red Sea Film Foundation's Women in Cinema Gala. Her latest appearance has quickly become a talking point among fans and fashion enthusiasts.

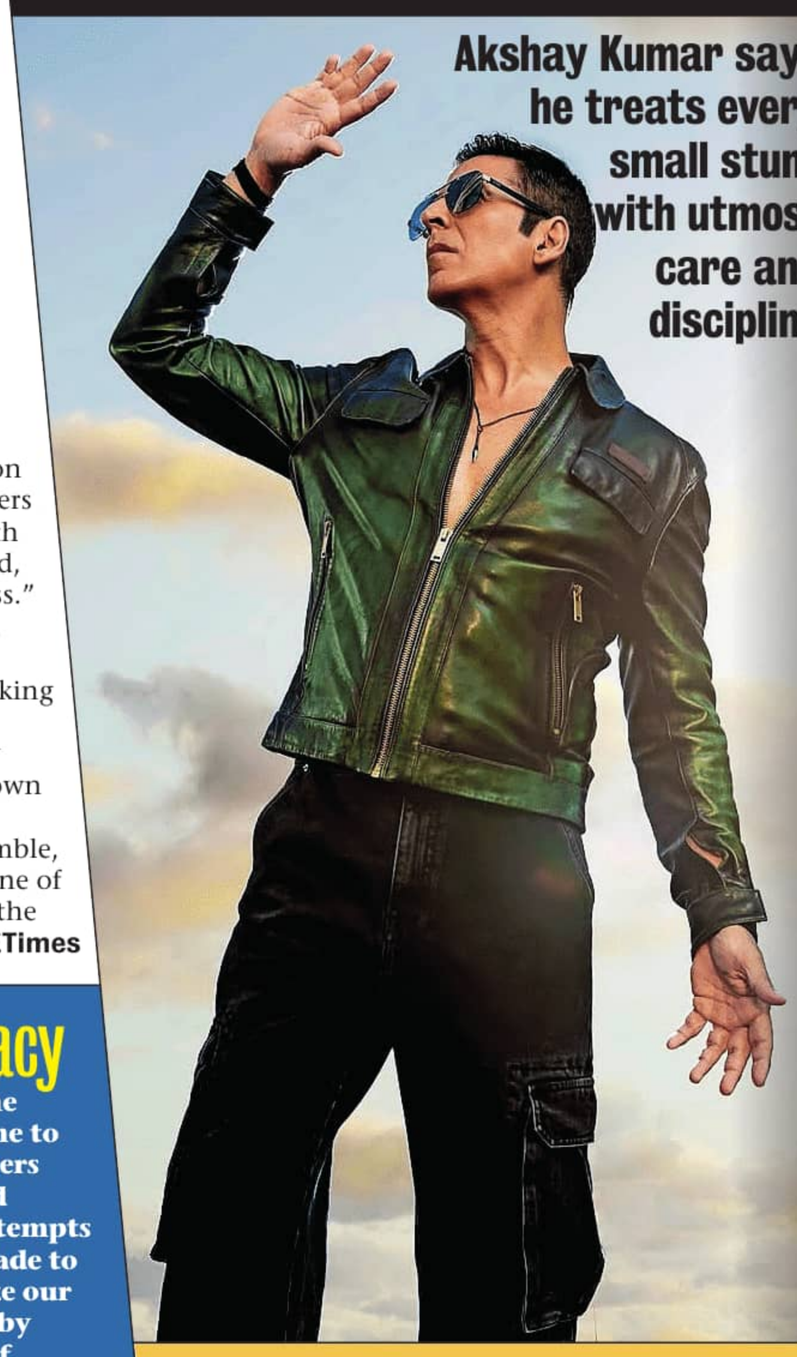
Tara attended the Women in Cinema gala dinner in a graceful white satin gown. The outfit highlighted her understated and refined style. She completed the look with a sleek bun and dazzling emerald and diamond jewellery. The ensemble earned widespread admiration online. Celebrity stylist Tanya Ghavri, who has been curating Tara's Cannes wardrobe, shared a series of videos from the event.

"La vie en rose," wrote Tanya while unveiling Tara's third look from the international event.

Videos of Tara's appearance soon went viral on social media. Admirers flooded the comments section with compliments. One fan commented, "Perfect." Another wrote, "Flawless." A third asked, "Won't she walk on the red carpet ?" Another admirer added, "gorgeous @tarasutaria looking like a dream."

Tara began her Cannes journey with a striking black-and-white gown that earned glowing reviews. She followed it with an all-black ensemble, which further established her as one of the standout Indian celebrities at the festival. **— ETimes**

Not just pulling a stunt



Akshay Kumar says he treats every small stunt with utmost care and discipline

Akshay Kumar's journey in Hindi cinema is unlike most others. Over three decades, he has effortlessly switched between action, comedy, drama, and social entertainers, never slowing down and always staying relevant.

In a conversation with Variety India, Akshay opened up about the moments that have stayed with him through his long career, from hair-raising stunts to the discipline that became the backbone of everything he does. Famous for pushing his physical limits on screen, the actor admits that no stunt ever feels routine or safe. "I have performed many stunts and even (for) a smaller stunt I think there was a lot more. So you know I have to be very careful when I do my stunts. For me, every stunt is a lot more," he shared.

After making it big with action films in the 1990s, Akshay reveals that his first major purchase was close to his heart. Without hesitation, he says, "My flat." The actor also shares that his approach to scripts has always been a little different from most. While many actors sit down with bound screenplays, Akshay prefers to have stories told to him out loud. "Well, I have always not read my script. I always actually hope somebody reads it for me. And I love to hear the script till the interval and the next day again from the interval. I just want to see whether I remember it or not," he says. And when it comes to getting honest feedback on his work, Akshay doesn't look far. He answers, "My niece," when asked who he trusts the most for a genuine opinion. **—ETimes**

No comments please: Mouni chooses privacy

Actress Mouni Roy has turned off her comments section after announcing her divorce from Suraj Nambiar. On Thursday, the couple confirmed their divorce in a joint post in which they confirmed they are parting ways, and requested privacy. The actress soon turned off her comments section, and hid the existing comments. Currently, no comments are visible on the joint post.

While social media users, who couldn't comment on the recent post, swarmed to Mouni Roy's older posts. They dragged Disha into the marriage controversy surrounding Mouni and Suraj, and accused of being the home-wrecker.

The couple wrote in their post, "We note with dismay the unnecessary and intrusive attention into our personal lives by certain quarters of the media. We would like to state that we have decided to part ways and are taking the necessary time to address matters privately and amicably. Attempts have been made to sensationalize our private lives by circulation of fictitious narratives and blatant falsehoods, which do not reflect the reality of our relationship".

"After thoughtful reflection on evolving personal priorities, we have mutually chosen to move forward on separate paths with respect and understanding. At this point, we are focused on navigating this phase thoughtfully and privately..."

—ETimes

Over-the-top action film is bursting at its seams

SHERR
2.5 RATING ★★½☆☆
- **DIRECTOR** Prasiddh
- **ACTORS** Kiran Raj, Surekha Venkatesh, Chris Rodrigue, Shobhraj, Bala Rajwadi, Tanisha Kuppanda
- **CERTIFICATION** A
- **Duration** 130 minutes

Sherr is action-packed and delves into several issues such as the lives of orphans, market politics, ego, illegal trade of human organs and lack of ethics among some government hospital doctors. The director may have ended up taking too much on his plate as the narration goes awry. The movie seems stuffed with characters and a few of them are incongruous.

To begin with, the plot of the movie is weak. We start with an action scene between a prospective bridegroom and the protagonist. The need for this action scene is unconvincing. Shivu (Kiran Raj), an orphan who supplies flowers is said to be fighting with the family members of the bridegroom for refusing to pay for the flowers and also for beating his friend. The movie has Dhan Raj (Shobhraj), a cunning politician, who performs pooja at home on the one hand and keeps himself busy with anti-social activities. The other scene is Gilli (Chris Rodrigue), a psycho, picking up Bhuvana (Surekha Venkatesh) from a flower-laden truck in a market. Shivu and his friends rescue Bhuvana from Gilli. The other scene is a ladies' hostel that has a lesbian warden. Bhuvana claims she ran away from the ladies' hostel after she accidentally killed the warden. It is hard to believe that a girl, who is pursuing higher studies, agrees to stay with strangers. Bhuvana agrees to stay with a flower vendor (Veena Sundar) and gets close to Shivu.

Meanwhile, a few people are getting killed mysteriously on the outskirts. Indrani (Tanisha Kuppanda), a police inspector, tries to find out who is responsible for the murders.

Kiran Raj is at his best in romantic and action scenes. Chris Rodrigue has tried his best to showcase his acting skills. His acting reminds us of Yogi, who played Loose Mada in Duniya. Tanisha Kuppanda appears in a few scenes and it is not clear why she chose such an insignificant role. Yash Shetty and Shobhraj are convincing as vicious villains. Surekha has to hone her acting skills.

It is worth a watch for those who enjoy action movies. **—Y Maheswara Reddy**

Jyothika appreciates the grey area

South actor Jyothika says it's refreshing to see more shades being explored for women over 40 in Hindi cinema, particularly in the streaming space.

Jyotika, who was last seen in Hindi series "Dabba Cartel", now stars in Prime original movie "System", which also features Sonakshi Sinha. "It's a very fresh welcome here. I find them writing some amazing roles for 40 plus women. I'm seeing a diversity and I'm seeing the greys and a lot of different kinds of characters being played here. So, it's amazing," Jyothika told PTI in an interview.

Jyothika said her focus in the past decade has shifted towards scripts about women empowerment.

"...Because we're still into a huge theatre space there, roles are written from a male gaze point of view -- I love what I have done there and I'm still going to continue (in south). I still feel there are more shades being written here (Hindi cinema), the reason for that being OTT. I think it's really taken off more in the Hindi stream," she added. **—PTI**

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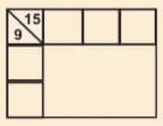
SOLVE IT IN A MINUTE

$\sqrt{X/10000} = \sqrt{0.13/100}$

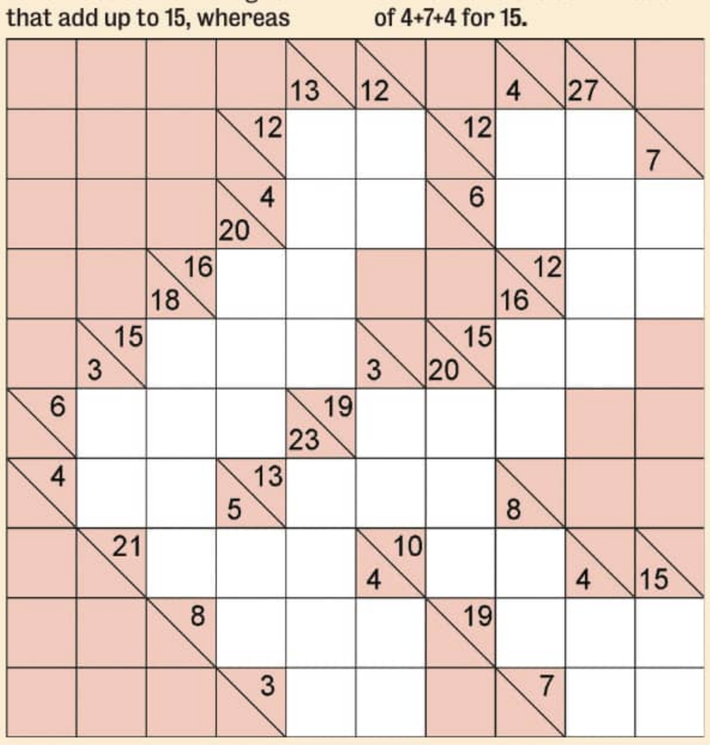
X=?

Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



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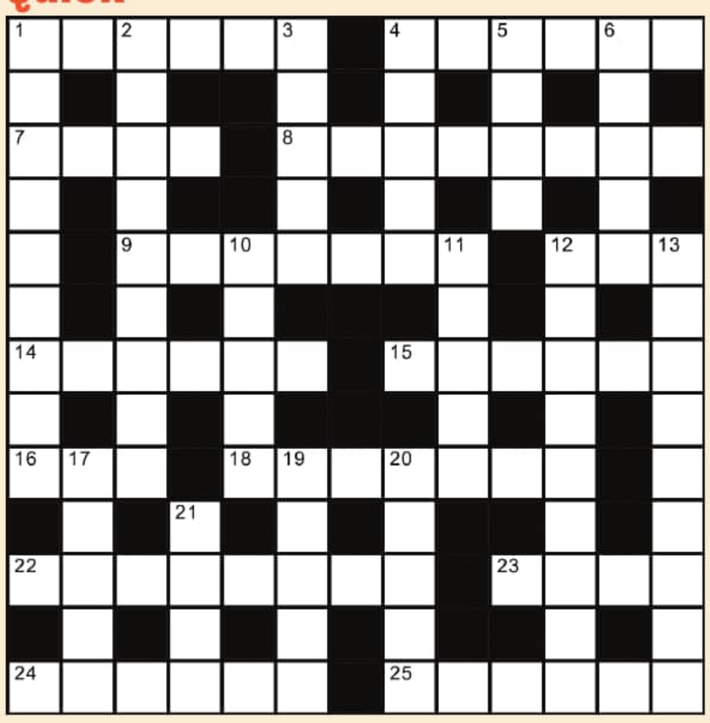


ACROSS

1 Most enlightened (6)
4 Karnataka city just south of Goa (6)
7 Attack a fly (4)
8 Ultimately (2,3,3)
9 Uses (7)
12 Pretoria locale (3)
14 Of inferior quality (6)
15 Drive from behind (6)
16 Meshed fabric (3)
18 Cut off sun's light (7)
22 Popular social networking site (8)
23 Epee handle (4)
24 Horse's quarters (6)
25 Vacillate (6)

DOWN

1 State abutting Lake Michigan (9)
2 Fall guy (informal) (9)
3 Quavering or vibratory sound (5)
4 Young domestic cat (5)
5 Felt remorse for (4)
6 Mom's sisters (5)
10 Priest or monk (5)
11 Share certificate (5)
12 Fill up again (9)
13 Large reptile (9)
17 Make into law (5)
19 Type of spice (5)
20 Annoyed (5)
21 Action word (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: Q EQUALS T

ZQ ZD QNV KBZCZFVYV ER YVAZWD QNXQ FZRV AVCVB YBEID MEPPEA KFXMV, XD ZQ OEVD REB QNV BVDQ ER WD.

Linemaro

Are you related to Trump? You sure trump the competition

Mindchow

If we do not change our direction, we are likely to end up where we are headed

Joke of the day

Half the people in Hollywood are dying to be discovered and the other half are afraid they will be

Loop

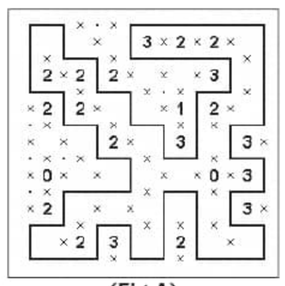
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

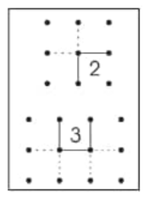
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

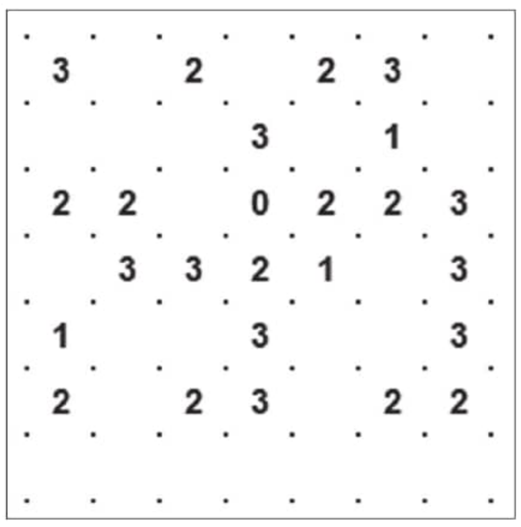
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



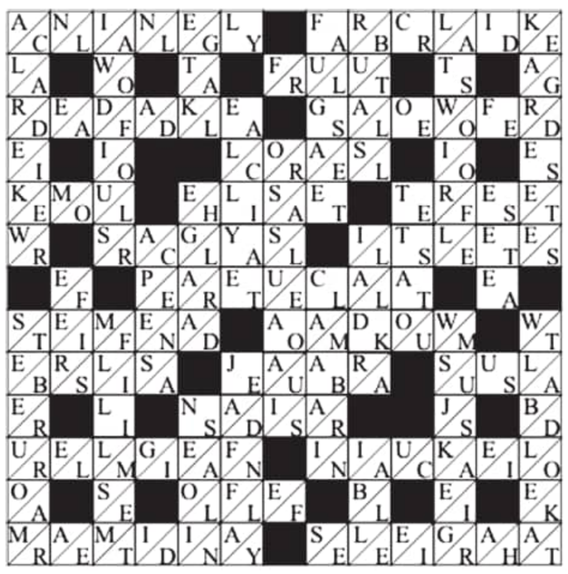
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



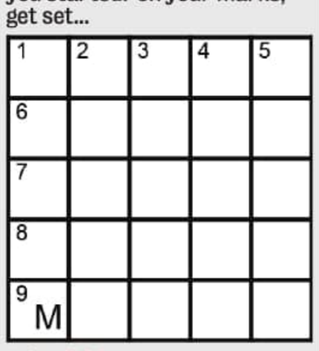
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

1 An Veg; 6 Emile; 7 Tenon; 8 I peon; 9 Teems

DOWN

1 Me Nov; 2 E Pole; 3 In gee; 4 Meant; 5 Senti

Mensapuzzle

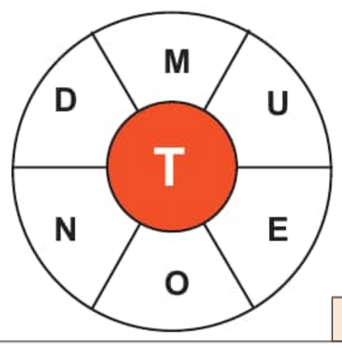
Which number fits into the empty box?

5	6	8
12	20	36

4	5	7
11	19	35

3	4	6
10	18	

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

14 Average; 16 Good; 18 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

8		6		5				3
		4			3	6		
	5						7	8
	7		4		2			
3				1				4
			6		7		1	
1	4						5	
		7	5			4		
9				7		3		2

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 16

1 9 4 2

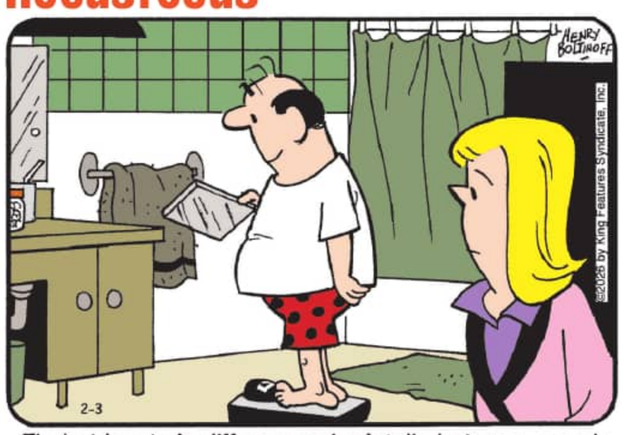
Medium = 12

4 7 7 3

Hard = 2

2 4 5 9

Hocusfocus



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Mirror is larger. 2. Scale is longer. 3. Counter leg is moved. 4. Front of robe is different. 5. Man is thinner. 6. Bath mat is shorter.

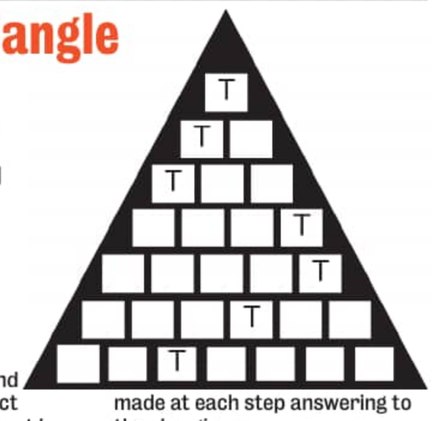
Riddler

Many of our everyday words have more than one meaning. Below are five pairs of definitions; both definitions in each pair fit the same word. Can you guess them all?

1. Small quantity of water or let fall
2. Airplane parking area or kitchen garment
3. Empty space or rug cleaning machine
4. Significance or ship in foreign merchandise
5. Boat's floor or pack of cards

Alpha triangle

1 Tonne, abbr.
2 Bye!
3 Breakfast drink
4 Chair
5 Sumptuous meal
6 Quicker
7 Sires

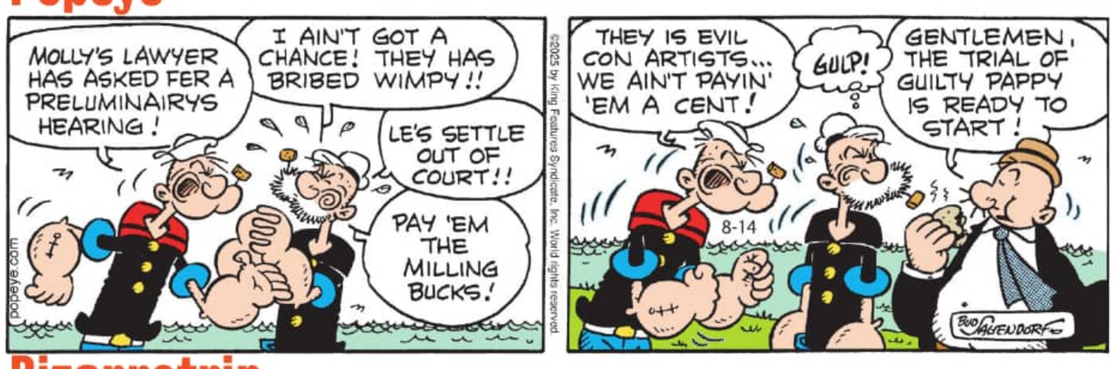


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Popeye


MOLLY'S LAWYER HAS ASKED FER A PRELUMINAIRYS HEARING!
I AIN'T GOT A CHANCE! THEY HAS BRIBED WIMPY!!
LE'S SETTLE OUT OF COURT!!
PAY 'EM THE MILLING BUCKS!
THEY IS EVIL CON ARTISTS... WE AIN'T PAYIN' 'EM A CENT!
GULP!
GENTLEMEN, THE TRIAL OF GUILTY PAPPY IS READY TO START!
8-14
BUD SAGENDORF
popeye.com
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Bizarrotrip

Libraries should welcome all points of view, so I want you to remove these books that I view as objectionable.
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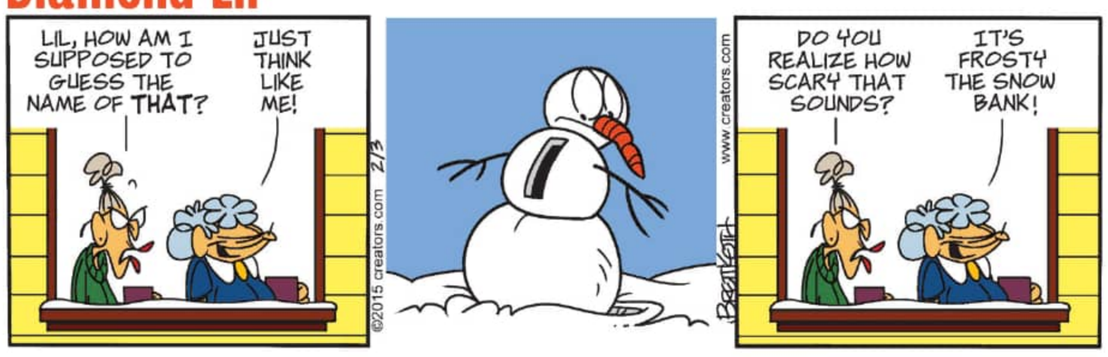
Diamond Lil


LIL, HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO GUESS THE NAME OF THAT?
JUST THINK LIKE ME!
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2/3
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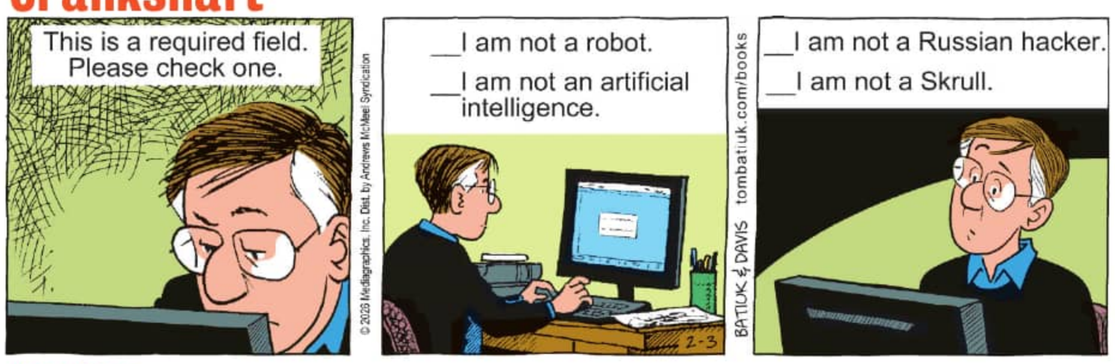
DO YOU REALIZE HOW SCARY THAT SOUNDS?
IT'S FROSTY THE SNOW BANK!
Bantleman

Hart of the city

WELCOME, KIDS, TO THE FINAL ROUND OF THE STAGE BUILDING CONTEST! ON THE COUNT OF THREE, TEAMS WILL JUMP ON THEIR STAGE TO TEST FOR STURDINESS. THE LAST GROUP STANDING WINS!
ONE!
TWO!
THREE!
JUMP!
CRACK!
PHILLY MIDDLE WINS!
WE WON?!
WE WON!!!
HEART OF THE CITY © 2026 ANDREWS MCMEEL

Crankshaft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Mutts

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ARG!
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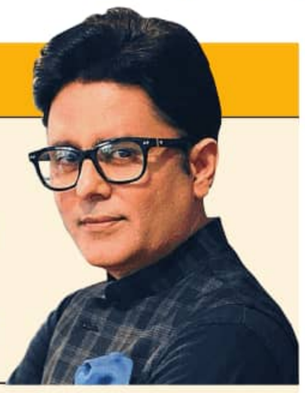
WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR



If it's your birthday today

Psychological depth and intense transformation are your themes. You are diving deep into your subconscious to clear away old patterns. This emotional work leads to a powerful sense of rebirth by your next birthday. Financial matters involving shared resources or inheritances may arise. Trust your inner strength to navigate these waters; you are more resilient than you ever realized.

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20

An unexpected connection brings pleasant news today. Career progress looks promising with possible recognition. Health remains steady, and a past relationship may resurface, offering a chance for clarity or closure.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20

Students may receive rewarding academic updates, reflecting their dedication. Romance finds its way back into your life, bringing warmth. Stay mindful of your health while enjoying a sense of financial security.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21

Relationship tensions may arise, but clear communication will help restore balance. Reconnecting with friends lifts your mood. Stay cautious professionally and with paperwork, while gradual health improvements bring relief today.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23

Break free from routine by planning something enjoyable with loved ones. A refreshing change of pace lifts your spirits. Health remains stable, and financial growth is likely to follow soon.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

Trust your decisions despite outside opinions, as confidence strengthens your personal life. Career growth brings recognition and financial improvement, creating stability while helping you feel more secure and accomplished overall.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23

Exploring a new career path may excite you, especially with guidance from experienced mentors. Health stays steady, while temporary financial support from trusted connections helps you stay balanced and reassured.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22

Matters of the heart begin to improve, bringing renewed confidence in relationships. A new opportunity may boost your finances significantly, while stable health allows you to enjoy this positive phase fully.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22

Your efforts bring rewarding outcomes, supporting both health and financial stability. Minor misunderstandings may arise, but you will manage them wisely, maintaining harmony while staying mindful about sharing personal matters.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22

Today feels uplifting as positive developments unfold across life areas. Encouraging news from your partner boosts happiness, while career growth and improved finances strengthen your confidence and overall sense of security.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20

You may rethink your current path and consider new opportunities. Though confidence feels low, this phase encourages courage and resilience, helping you face challenges bravely and gradually restore stability in life.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19

Financial stability brings comfort, and you may consider meaningful investments. Spending time with loved ones feels fulfilling, though minor disagreements may arise, which you can resolve calmly. Health remains supportive.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20

Students may feel busy, yet productive efforts bring results. Positive professional updates uplift your mood, while meaningful moments in relationships bring joy. Stay cautious with finances and take extra care of health.

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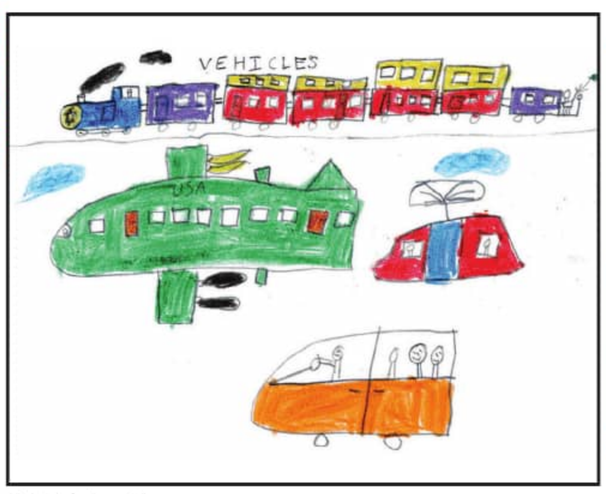
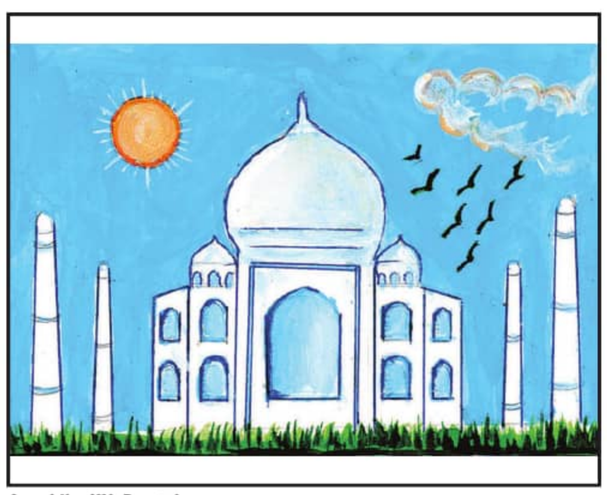
KIDZONE



Yajath S, Bengaluru



Anushika KV, Bengaluru

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SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M

X/10000=0.13/100
X/10000=13/10000
X/10⁴=13/10⁴
X=13

RIDDLER

1. Drop,
2. Apron,
3. Vacuum,4.
Import,
5. Deck

STRIKE OUT

QUICK

MENSA PUZZLE

34. Working with the corresponding numbers in each box the numbers decrease by one each move downwards.

QUOTE UNCODE

It is the privilege of genius that life never grows common place, as it does for the rest of us.

SUDOKU

8	9	6	7	5	1	2	4	3
7	1	4	2	8	3	6	9	5
2	5	3	9	4	6	1	7	8
5	7	1	4	9	2	8	3	6
3	6	9	8	1	5	7	2	4
4	2	8	6	3	7	5	1	9
1	4	2	3	6	9	4	5	7
6	3	7	5	2	9	4	8	1
9	8	5	1	7	4	3	6	2

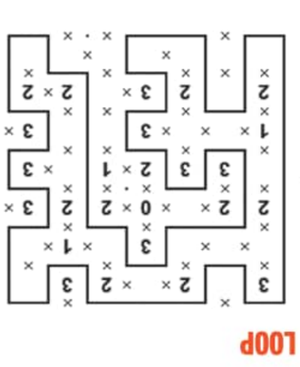
ALPHA TRIANGLE

T, Ta, Tea, Seat, Feast, Faster, Fathers.

GO FIGURE

Easy
9 + 4 + 2 + 1 = 16
Medium
3 x 4 + 7 – 7 = 12
Hard
2 – 4 + 9 – 5 = 2

LOOP



KAKURO

BULL'S EYE

dent, dote, duet, mote, mount, MOUNTED, mute, muted, note, noted, tend, toed, tome, tone, toned, tune, tuned, unto

FAST FIVE

V	E	G	A	N
E	L	E	M	I
N	O	N	E	T
O	P	I	N	E
M	E	E	T	S

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